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Parks and Recreation Minutes 03/02/2004

Park and Recreation Commission Minutes Special Capital Planning Session

Tuesday, March 2, 2004 - 7:00 p.m.

Approved Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:00 PM.

Commissioners Present: Joseph Carabello, Thomas Caccavaro,
Nancy Campbell, and Leslie Mayer

Staff Present: Jonathan Jalbert, Recreation Superintendent
Teresa DeBenedictis, Assistant Director DPW

Recording Secretary: Laura Munsey

Mr. Vitters was not present at this meeting and it was decided many of the Capital Plan issues should not be discussed without his input. The issue regarding hiring a clerk of the works will be postponed until a later meeting.

Mr. Maher is reviewing the Park and Recreation Commissions' Warrant Article regarding signage at fields by user groups to insure all issues and concerns are addressed. The Board of Selectmen is not necessarily opposed to this article, however they have some concerns and questions they would like resolved. There will be a March 11 meeting with user groups at the Whittemore Robbins House at 7:00 pm. Selectman Hurd would like to submit an additional CDBG Proposal to include Thompson Playground safety surfacing due to the high number of injuries related to insufficient fill.

Mr. Jalbert shared with the Commission Mr. Robert DiLoreto's request to delay the start of the Buzzell Field Project, due to the pending renovation of Peirce Field. The agreement between mitigating parties was just approved for the renovation of Peirce Field and the project is anticipated to begin this summer. Mr. Jalbert stated Mr. DiLoreto's desire to use Buzzell Field as the football practice site while Peirce Field is under renovation. Mr. DiLoreto is concerned about transporting the football teams to other fields, and believes Buzzell would be the ideal location based on proximity to the High School.

Many questions were raised regarding the impact to and potential increase in costs by delaying the Buzzell Field project. The Buzzell Field project has already had funding approved by Town Meeting, been bid out for the Architectural Phase, and a contract has been awarded. It was discussed that the delay could potentially change the number of athletic seasons Buzzell would be closed, and the landscape architects had advised the Commission that the best time for field projects is to begin in fall. The project might need to be delayed an entire year or possibly two if delays occur at Peirce. Ms. Campbell stated she would like to invite Mr. DiLoreto to a Commission meeting to discuss these issues in greater detail.

Upon further discussion some members of the Commission stated that Hurd Field could be used as an adequate alternative for the High School as well as Pop Warner. There would be sufficient parking. A storage trailer could be moved on site, without being intrusive to residential abutters, the Reservoir bathhouse could be used as a locker room and bathroom facilities would be opened.

Hurd is also a lighted field. Hurd is scheduled for capital improvements the following year, so any damage caused by this use, could be rectified. Many AHS teams have practices at other fields that are not within walking distance. Mr. Carabello stated that due to the amount of equipment needed by the players, football may have different issues than other programs.

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Tom Caccavaro)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION WILL CONTINUE WITH THE SCHEDULED RENOVATION OF BUZZELL FIELD TO REDUCE THE POTENTIAL FOR ANY FINANCIAL PENALTIES THE DELAY MAY CAUSE. THE ARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PROGRAM AND POP WARNER FOOTBALL PROGRAM SHALL SHARE HURD FIELD DURING THE FALL OF 2004.

VOTE UNANIMOUS (4-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION

Mr. Jalbert would like the Park and Recreation Commission to set a policy regarding use and payment of lighted fields by user groups, and how best to handle the rising cost of electricity as well as the maintenance of electrical infrastructure at the fields.

There have been problems identified regarding who is responsible for demand charges, and who has exclusive use of fields if only one user group pays for light bills, and who pays for repairs. Mr. Jalbert would like to submit a proposal and recommendation so groups don't need to pay for lights when they are not using them, and all costs are covered by those who do.

There are two more fence poles down at Robbins Farm and they should be brought to the Recreation Department. This issue is on the punch list and final payment has been withheld.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 pm